

The Village and the World Outside / 39

the state of Morelos is excellent and covers all the municipios of the state. Excursions organized by the school give the younger generation an opportunity to know their state.

The proximity of Cuernavaca, the state capital, also plays some part in developing a consciousness of being Morelenses. In Cuernavaca there are secondary and preparatory schools to which some Tepoztecans parents send their children, since the local school reaches only to the sixth grade.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year the secretary of education makes available a number of student scholarships for advanced study outside the village. About fifty Tepoztecans have received such scholarships during the past fifteen years, and many of these students have returned to the village to teach or to carry on their work as farmers. The experience away from home makes for many changes in habits and customs, and must be reckoned as another source of culture change, though obviously a limited one.

CULTURAL MISSIONS

Paralleling the work of the school is that of the cultural missions, also a federal service, which travel throughout the country visiting peasant and Indian communities and giving instruction for adults. Tepoztlán has had a cultural mission for two years, and in 1947 the mission worked in one of the surrounding villages of the municipio. All of the members of the mission were non-Tepoztecans, again making for increased opportunities to become familiar with customs from different parts of the country. The mission taught Tepoztecans how to make beds, chairs, and other furniture; it taught the girls knitting, sewing, and crocheting; it encouraged social dancing and sports such as volleyball; it taught the women how to make inexpensive candies and preserves; it worked on improving the homes by getting a few families to build privies and to raise the hearth off the floor for more sanitary cooking. In addition, there was a doctor attached to the mission who administered inoculations and gave advice on baby care.

BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS

Most of the books which reach Tepoztlán are textbooks used in the school. One of the innovations of the Mexican government since the Revolution has been the elimination of most texts written by foreigners, and the substitution of texts written by Mexicans, which seek to arouse Mexican nationalism. Stories of the Mexican Indians have been substituted for those of children of other lands, and national heroes receive an important place in most texts dealing with history. The secretary of education has printed millions of copies of history texts which are distributed free, and some of these books have reached Tepoztecans homes.

Among other publications which occasionally reach Tepoztlán are leaflets put out by the Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (now the Partido Revolucionario

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[208] Institucional) presidential messages, propaganda leaflets from the League of Agrarian Communities, the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos, and the Sinarquistas. However, the reading public is still very small, and for the most part such leaflets go unnoticed.

Twenty years ago the few literate persons in the village read novels, such as the popular *Génova de Brabante* or *María el Hada del Bosque* and, among the youth, the *Secretario de los Amantes*. Today one finds the youth reading the popular comics "Paquín" and "Chamaco." The principal characters in these comics are Mexicans and the jokes are full of Mexicanisms associated with city life.

533 Other fairly common items read by young Tepoztecos are the *cancioneros* (song sheets), some of which are distributed free by the Bayer Aspirin Company as part of their advertising. These songs are written by Mexicans and generally reflect much of the life of the countryside in different regions of Mexico. It is not unusual on a moonlit night to hear groups of young men singing of a legend of Mayab, or a *danzón* from Vera Cruz, or a song from Jalisco. American tunes such as "Begin the Beguine," sung in Spanish, are also occasionally heard. Many of the songs exalt the virtues of the Mexicans and of Mexico, and reflect the growing sense of nationalism. Thus, we were not surprised to hear a young Tepoztecán on his way to the fields singing, "Soy puro mexicano, nacido en esta tierra que es mi linda nación." This song is a symbol of Tepoztecán localism slowly giving way to identification with the Mexican nation.

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204 Because of the proximity of the state capital to Mexico City, local newspapers are overshadowed by the national dailies. However, two small papers are published in Cuernavaca, and these carry local notices, news, and many advertisements of the commercial houses of Cuernavaca. Some of these newspapers reach Tepoztlán, but they are read primarily by the local government officials. On fiesta days the paper is sometimes sold by a hawker who may announce some sensational murder in the state. The paper is very Morelos-conscious and uses slogans such as, "Every good Morelense buys these products" or "Morelos advances towards agricultural progress," etc. The only other local periodical which reaches a few Tepoztecos is the *Diario Oficial del Estado*, read primarily by the courthouse officials.

LITERACY CAMPAIGN

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[619] Another federal service which reached Tepoztlán and contributed toward the identification of Tepoztecos with the nation was the campaign against illiteracy, carried out by the Department of Education. The slogans used included, "Mexico must be great because of its culture" and "The Fatherland must have citizens who can read." Slogans such as these were posted on billboards in the village, and representatives from the Department of Education came to Tepoztlán, gave talks, and showed movies. It was recognized that in a village like Tepoztlán the original idea of each literate teaching at least one illiterate how to read would not work. The program was therefore organized by the schoolteachers in terms of adult evening classes for illiterates.

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Today

252 almost every house has a hearth made of three stones set in a triangle, or of stones
 511 plastered in the shape of a horseshoe, to support the griddle. It is no longer always
 354 located on the floor, but is frequently raised to almost table-height by means of a
 [177] cement platform. The use of platforms has been stimulated by the cultural missions
 [658] that have visited the village and demonstrated to the more interested and enter-
 [556] prising women some ways of improving their homes. The *brasero*, a raised clay
 252 stove with two or three charcoal-burning iron grates on top, is generally still
 571 found only in better-to-do homes and is used sparingly or only for preparing fiesta
 [415] meals. The *comal* (griddle), which in Redfield's time was always clay, is now
 frequently iron, and many families own one of each type. Though the *comal* is
 still an indispensable utensil in every home, the increasing consumption of bread,
 especially for breakfast and supper, makes it somewhat less used than formerly.
 [415] The same is true of the *metate* (grinding stone), since almost all women now have
 [412] their corn ground at the mill. But every home has one or more *metates* for re-
 [256] grinding mill-ground corn and for emergencies. *Metates* are also used for coffee
 [415] and for large quantities of chile for fiestas. Despite the commercial mills, no
 Tepoztecan woman would set up housekeeping without her own *metate*. Finally,
 the *olla*, mentioned by Redfield, is the clay pot in which the maize for tortillas is
 cooked. To this utensil must be added the pot for beans, another for coffee, and
 another for meat. Most families have one large pot to retain the water in which
 maize has been soaked and cooked, and the water needed to moisten the woman's
 [231] hands as she makes tortillas. This water, which contains some nourishment, is then
 fed to the pigs.

571 The remaining house furnishings are relatively few; they consist mainly of
 513 sleeping equipment, religious articles, and various containers for storage. For
 [352] sleeping there are three kinds of beds: the *petate* or straw mat placed on the floor;
 the *tepeexo*, a raised bed of bamboo sticks tied together and placed on a wooden
 frame or on two sawhorses; and a brass or iron bedstead with metal springs over
 which a *petate*, rather than a mattress, is generally placed. The great majority of
 the population sleep either on the floor or on the *tepeexo*, and only 19.29 per cent
 sleep on a bed or cot.⁴ The proportion of those who sleep on a bed or cot for Mexico
 as a whole is far greater (61.1 per cent), and even for communities of 10,000 or
 less inhabitants it is 53.4 per cent.⁵

The majority of Tepozteicans sleep on the floor because they lack the funds to
 buy beds, but most of the older generation, regardless of their economic status,
 [177] sleep that way by preference. Many an acculturated family has sought without suc-
 [753] cess to accustom the old mother or grandmother to sleeping on a bed. Some old
 people are afraid of falling off during the night, others say that to sleep off the
 ground is to be more subject to *los aires* (evil winds). One old woman told her
 grandchildren that it is better to sleep on the floor because it is closer to mother

⁴ This figure was derived from a special tabulation of census data for Tepostlán taken from the Mexican Census of 1940.

⁵ Whetten, *Rural Mexico*, p. 291.

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sequence of a national campaign by the Minister of Education. Baseball, soccer, basketball, and volleyball were taught by the school and had immediate appeal among the youth. From the first, soccer was most popular. In 1929 a sports club of 22 soccer players, all from the three center barrios, was organized. The popularity of the game developed slowly until 1930, when the number of enthusiasts increased sharply because of the efforts of a new school director. Between 1934 and 1936, at the time that the road was being built, there were as many as 15 soccer teams. Even the religious barrio of Santa Cruz had its team. This enthusiasm lasted for about three years. In 1939 no soccer team existed and the interest in the sport lapsed for a few years.

There are now five teams, four in the large, center barrios and one in the small barrio of Los Reyes. The teams play against each other with the traditional barrio spirit of competition. They also play against teams from Cuernavaca and other nearby towns. There is no athletic field in the village, and the center teams play in the large yard of the Cathedral while the Los Reyes team rents a field. The scarcity of level land makes it impossible to use any of the communal land, and the young men are thinking of buying a plot of land for an athletic field. The only equipment bought by the team is the ball. About half of the players own special soccer shoes; the other half play barefoot or in huaraches.¹⁴

The teams usually play to an audience of small boys. Adults are disinterested in games or actively disapprove of them, and parents do not permit their daughters to attend. When teams from other villages play, only a few girls from the center barrios come to watch. The skill and triumphs of the players are appreciated by a handful of people; there are no fans and there is no community spirit in connection with this sport.

In 1947, when a Cultural Mission was in Tepoztlán, there was an attempt made to stimulate wider interest in games by organizing an inter village competition and appointing committees of *madrinas* or godmothers for each team. The *madrinas* came dressed in white and bearing flowers for each team, but the audiences remained as small as ever.

The advantages of the cooperative action involved in team playing, and the unifying effect of a strong common interest, are experienced only by the actual members of the teams. Small as this group is, their experience in cooperation is of some significance in so highly individualistic a village as Tepoztlán.

Recreational activities in Tepoztlán were further diversified with the opening of a billiard room in 1935. This was another point of conflict between the older people and the younger men of the village. The poolroom was quickly characterized as a breeding place of drunkenness and bad habits. But despite their objections, pool became popular among the boys of all the barrios. When boys began to stay out of school to play, parents forced the local administration to ban poolrooms from admitting boys under eighteen years of age. There are now two poolrooms, one with

¹⁴ A professional soccer player from Mexico City admired the skill of young Tepoztláners in kicking the hard ball with their bare toes.

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others by Federico Campos, aided by the Fraternales. The municipal president took up this problem with the governor of the state, with the deputy for the district, and with the president of the political party, but nothing was gained. After the legal elections, all the candidates came out null and void. The state government intervened in the matter and appointed the municipal council. This council, made up of completely different persons, was to take office on the first of January like a legally elected council.

ADMINISTRATION OF 1945-46

On the first of January, 1945, the appointed municipal council was installed, consisting of J. Guadalupe Ortega, Miguel Ríos, and Fortino Guzmán, in place of all the candidates who had set out to occupy the municipal offices. This council was pledged to send out within ninety days the summons for new elections to form the council which was to officiate during this same period. On the first of April, the candidates who were supported by the Fraternales—that is, Federico Campos as president, Domingo G. Alvarado as *regidor de hacienda*, and Juan Z. Rodríguez as attorney general—were installed. After having taken office, they proceeded to notify all the important people to take notice, also other friends whom they had in Mexico City.

Before coming to power, Federico Campos had counted on some adherents, among whom were some persons of moderate culture. But since he did not listen to their counsel he achieved nothing but hatred. These persons had proposed that he should improve the water system, a matter of great importance to the town. After the labors of experts, and efforts on all sides, Campos succeeded in getting the governor to sign a contract with the Secretariat of Health and Social Work to complete the work which was so much desired.

At the same time, the matter of obtaining electricity was discussed in an interview with the secretary of national economy, who ordered that additional studies should be made concerning the matter. Later they had an interview with the president of Mexico, who gave orders to the secretary of national economy. After all the efforts made in the different departments, the federal election of new officers gravely harmed the works completed. Since there was a complete change in the government, they declared that all the work was useless because it was necessary to have new studies made by the new officials.

With this, Campos lost heart completely, and he limited himself to expediting the matters in his office. Furthermore, since the other villages of the township knew that Campos was trying to improve the villages, others approached him for aid in the matter of bringing drinking water to their people. When the municipal president, or rather the council, saw that the villages were also interested, they tried to unite in order to bring about an adequate water system for all, and on one occasion they interviewed the authorities of another township which had a sufficient water supply to make additional outlets possible. The negotiations were successful, but this township was a considerable distance away, and much capital was required to purchase the materials needed to bring in the water. When the estimates were made, the sum was fantastic in relation to the economic possibilities of the villages.

This council also tried to improve the town by aiding in the literacy campaign. Since the adults, who did not know how to read or write, refused to study, the council visited all the villages of the township and named the sub-committees, just as an extension of the committee of four hundred working in the municipal seat. Campos tried to raise funds to pay the teachers at the literacy centers. When people refused to contribute or to attend classes, he acted in accordance with the law and punished those who did not comply

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646 But as there are always people who try to interfere with the work of the individual in charge, these people got together and complained to the government of the state. They declared that they were being charged large sums, and that the money was being taken by the municipal president for himself. In view of this, Campos was suspended and called before the governor of the state, to render an account of the funds collected. The governor of the state later realized that these charges were merely calumnies with which the people were trying to discredit the municipal president.

175 This council did not work in harmony with the Commissariat of the Ejidos, since they were of opposing parties. Because of this, the Commissariat of the Ejidos tried to 646 usurp some properties of the township, such as the textile workshops, which are almost on the edge of the town. It was on this account that Campos, seeing that this was wrong, tried [624] to oppose them. He also opposed them in the matter of the communal forests, which, though owned by the town, were being managed by the Commissariat of the Ejidos.

During this administration they also held the inauguration of the school which had been built by the request of Angel Bocanegra. Of course, there had to be high personages present, among them the president himself. The council tried to get together some funds for the inauguration, proceeding immediately to print coupons for sale to the citizens. The governor of the state learned of this and, as the state government had taken on itself the matter of the inauguration, he ordered that the funds which had been collected in the town should be refunded to each of the contributors.

On one occasion when the governor was to speak on the matter of the inauguration, the municipal president was not to be found in the town, and this was sufficient reason for the governor to become very angry. Speaking with the enemies of the council, he declared to them that they were authorized to impeach Campos and all the other members of the council and to set others in their places, who would know how to take care of the administration of a town. Some people wished to do this, but others decided that it was preferable that Campos should continue.

On the day of the inauguration of the school, Campos pinned a medal on Angel Bocanegra, calling him "favorite son of this town," and he also pinned another medal on the governor. When this council finished its term, it also tried to elect its candidate for the [666] municipal presidency. He was an intimate friend, but he could not win because of being from another township.

SUMMARY

The above account gives some insight into the behavior of politicians and touches upon some of the salient aspects of political life in the village. (See Fig. 48.) These might be summarized briefly as follows:

- 631 (1) According to the law of the state of Morelos, municipios are to be free and 642 autonomous political and administrative units. In practice we have seen that this is not the case. Rather, the municipio appears to be no more than an administrative [666] dependency of the governor. It is he who resolves conflicts and makes most of the important decisions for the municipio, including the determination of who shall be the successful candidate. The incident cited above, whereby the president arranges with the opposition group in Tepoztlán to depose the president because the latter did not happen to be in the village when the governor made an unexpected call, is indicative of his arbitrary action.